

February 5, 2013

Aging Committee - Public Hearing on Proposed S.B. No. 79
AN ACT REQUIRING ELECTRICAL POWER GENERATORS AT STATE-ASSISTED
SENIOR HOUSING DEVELOPMENTS.

Testimony of Scott C. Bertrand

Ladies and Gentlemen of the Aging Committee: My name is Scott Bertrand and I am a Past President of the Connecticut Chapter of the National Association of Housing & Redevelopment Officials more commonly known as CONN-NAHRO. I am also the Executive Director of the Enfield Housing Authority where I have worked for over 11 years.

I have mixed feelings regarding S.B. 79 – An Act Requiring Electrical Power Generators at State-Assisted Senior Housing Developments.

Enfield, like many towns, had been adversely affected by extended power outages caused by the freak snowstorm in October 2011. Fortunately, the Town of Enfield was able to put their well thought Emergency Operations Plan into action. Shelters were quickly established and made available to all residents, including those living in our five senior housing developments. The housing authority worked with the town to provide transportation for any of our residents who needed it. However, almost all decided to either relocate with friends and family or chose to ride it out in their apartments. People were given a choice to move to a location that would fulfill their needs or endure being without electricity.

Installing generators at senior developments is a noble idea. However it is one that comes at an extremely high cost. For the Enfield Housing Authority, it is estimated to cost a minimum of \$60,000 just to provide basic power to the community room spaces. It should be noted that community rooms are not adequate to be used as shelters nor is the housing authority equipped to provide shelter services.

If emergency power is mandated to provide power to each apartment, the estimated cost skyrockets to over \$2.2 million. I believe the cost to provide emergency power to all such developments in Connecticut would well exceed \$50 Million.

If the State of Connecticut is prepared to cover the expense, then I support this legislation. If the funding is not included, the costs could cripple already cash strapped developments and I must oppose S.B. 79.

In closing, I would like to share a comment made to me recently by a local citizen who heard of the issue through the media. He asked *"will the state also provide a generator for my elderly mother who lives alone in her own home and not in senior housing?"* I believe this to be a reasonable question considering that 83%, or 3,398 households, over age 65 in Enfield own their home. The above question should also be considered before enacting an unfunded mandate on the senior housing residents who will ultimate pay the cost through the form of rent increases.

Respectfully submitted,

Scott C. Bertrand